

**RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION
OF THE CULTURE
OF PEACE IN AFRICA**

**ACTIVITY REPORT
2017-2018**

By
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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INTRODUCTION

The Network of Foundations and Research Institutions for the Promotion of the Culture of Peace in Africa (REFICA) is five years old. Established on September 21, in Addis Ababa, it became fully operational in 2014, after its first assembly held in Yamoussoukro, to mark the 25th anniversary of the concept of the culture of peace.

The network currently has 44 foundations and research institutions in Africa, Europe and the United States. Its aims at coordinating the actions of foundations and research institutions, in order to ensure a common vision and practices and the pooling of resources and means of action, for the promotion of the culture of peace in Africa. It should contribute to the implementation of the Luanda Action Plan and the African Union's 2063 Agenda, the UNESCO's Cross-sector Programme on The Culture of Peace, and the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

Two activity reports, for 2014-2015 and 2015-16, have already been prepared and approved by the Network's general meetings, held in Soyo and Luena, Angola, respectively, in 2015 and 2016.

The current report gives an account on all of the Network's activities for the years 2017 and 2018. It consists of three sections, respectively, devoted to the implementation of the recommendations of the last General Assembly, the operation and activities of the Network.

I. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LAST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The last general assembly meeting of the Network held on December 13, 2016 in Luena, Angola, made four recommendations: the legal existence of the Network, UNESCO membership, strengthening cooperation with UNESCO, the budget and the network Membership fees.

1.1. The Legal Existence of the Network

The procedure is ongoing with the Ivorian authorities. The constitution has to be amended to include two auditors and two treasurers. They will then be approved and the authorization receipt issued.

1.2. UNESCO membership

The application for membership was submitted, through a letter from the President of the Network to the Director-General of UNESCO. It's been approved.

1.3. Strengthening cooperation with UNESCO

An official correspondence was sent to the Director-General of UNESCO with the aim of strengthening cooperation with UNESCO and its liaison system, to take into account some of the Network's financial concerns in the 2018-2021 four-year budget of the UN organization.

1.4. Budget and membership fees

A draft budget of 100 million CFA francs, or approximately US\$168,067, was developed. Membership fees for Network members are set at US\$100.

The Committee for Resources Mobilization, which has not worked, must be reactivated despite the Executive Secretary's reminders to the designated members. Account auditors and treasurers must also be appointed in order to open a bank account.

II. THE NETWORK'S OPERATION

Four elements of assessment are taken into account: the regulatory texts, the meetings of the Network's bodies, the admission of new members and the operation of the website.

2.1. *Regulatory texts*

The last general meeting of the Network in Luena had discussed the Constitution and the by laws. They were to be brought into line with the first drafts adopted at the Network's founding meeting. There is another constraint, compliance with the Ivorian legislation on associations, including the appointment of auditors.

2.2. *Meetings of the Network's bodies*

The General Assembly, according to Article 11 of the Constitution, meets once every two years in regular session. It was scheduled to meet in 2018 for the Luanda Biennial. As the meeting has been postponed until 2019, the Assembly meeting will be held on the sidelines of the events.

The President of the Network, Mr. Joao de Deus, Director General of the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation (FESA), held a working session with Standing Executive Secretary Jean-Noel Loucou on November 29, 2018 in Abidjan. An update was made on the diligences agreed at the last meeting of the network members, including participation in the Luanda Biennial, cooperation with UNESCO, and funding for the Network's activities.

2.3. *New membership*

Eight (08) institutions applied to join the Network. These are:

- The International Association for Peace and Development in Africa (Cameroon), chaired by Jean Vivien Habyarimana,
- The Niger River Festival Foundation (Mali), chaired by Mr. Mamou Daffé,
- The Regional Centre for The Living Arts (Cerav), Burkina Faso, headed by Delegate General Michel Saba,
- The Leopold Sédar Senghor Foundation (Senegal), led by Mr. Raphael Ndiaye,
- The Martin Luther King Group (Democratic Republic of Congo), led by Dr. Christophe Nyambatsi Mutaka,
- The Henriette Dagri Diabaté Foundation (Côte d'Ivoire), led by Gisèle Aké

- The IADS Foundation (Côte d'Ivoire) chaired by Dr. Gnamien Yao
- The Nelson Mandela Institute (France), chaired by Dr. Paul Kananura.

To date, only the Mandela Institute has confirmed its membership. Requests from other institutions await confirmation.

2.4. The Network's website

The website of the Network of Foundations and Research Institutions for the Promotion of a Culture of Peace in Africa (www.reseaupaix.org) has been online since September 2014 and has been renovated from June 2017. The day-to-day management of this website is carried out by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) department of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for the Search for Peace, which is headed by Mr. Frank Olivier Djamara. The complete redesign of this site benefited from the expertise of Mr. Félix-Hervé Houphouët-Boigny, a web consultant.

The site's core mission is to disseminate all information about the activities of the Network in general and its members in particular. He is fully bilingual (French and English) and has an account in French on social networks:

- Facebook with 223 subscribers (www.facebook.com/reficafr)
- Twitter with 33 followers (www.twitter.com/reficafr)
- YouTube with 2 subscribers (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTI-LEXEEUM26pOWBlw?view_as=subscriber).

The followings are under development to boost the visibility of the site: a collaborative platforming between the members of the Network for sharing their activities, a digital newsletter and the English version of the Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts.

A special acknowledgement should be extended to Mr. David Adams of the Culture of Peace News Network, who regularly and actively collaborates on the Network's website. This example should encourage other members of the network to do the likewise.

III. THE NETWORK'S ACTIVITIES

The Network has started scientific and cultural activities and participated in those it was associated with.

3.1. *Symposiums and conferences*

The Eduardo dos Santos Foundation (FESA), which chairs the Network, organized another international conference, after the one in Soyo in 2015. It was held from 12 to 13 December 2016 in Luena, Angola, on the theme: "Preventing violence and promoting the culture of peace during elections in Africa".

The chairman of the Network, Joao de Deus Gomes Pereira, participated in the dinner-debate arranged by CEPS, UNESCO and the Standing Delegation of France to UNESCO, on the theme "Culture of Peace, the Youth and Electoral Processes" which took place in Paris on 30 May 2017. He presented the findings of the Luena International Conference.

The Executive Secretary Jean-Noel Loucou attended the International Peace Conference from 26 to 28 September 2017 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. The conference was organized by the World Fellowship of Buddhists and the Standing Delegation of the Kingdom of Thailand to UNESCO, under the aegis of the Venerable Master Chin Kung, chairman of Pure Land Learning College Association and Friends of Master Chin Kung at UNESCO. The Executive Secretary presented a paper on the Pan-African School of Peace project and interfaith dialogue in the process of national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire.

He was also invited to the symposium organized by UNESCO's Africa Department and the Centre for Diplomatic and Strategic Studies (CEDS) on "Diplomacy, Economics and Culture for Peace in Africa" on 2 July 2018 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. He presented the initiative of the Pan-African School of Peace, supported by UNESCO, the African Union and the Ivorian Government.

The Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for the Search for Peace organized an international symposium on "The Work of Peace by Felix Houphouët-Boigny" from 18 to 20 October 2018 in Yamoussoukro. The scientific meeting included 115 participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and France.

The UNESCO Chair for the Culture of Peace at The University of Felix Houphouët-Boigny organized an international symposium on "Endogenous

Mechanisms for Conflict Resolution in Africa" from 28 to 30 November 2018 in Abidjan. The network was represented by its Chair and Executive Secretary.

3.2. The Pan-African Peace School Project

This project is being carried out by the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for the Search for Peace. Organic texts are ready; a \$2 million draft budget has been developed. A request has been made for the School to be classified as a UNESCO Category 2 centre. The actual start-up is linked to the implementation of the requested funding.

3.3. Publications

The UNESCO Chair at the University of Florence and the Félix Houphouët-Boigny University have published studies on the culture of peace and the endogenous mechanisms of conflict prevention, management and resolution in West Africa.

The Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for the Search for Peace devoted issue 5 of its academic journal **Dialogue and Peace** to "security challenges in Africa" and in issue 6 published in 2017, a study on "Militias in Africa".

CONCLUSION

This report, which is submitted for the consideration of the General Assembly, reports on all of the Network's activities over the past two years.

Despite the recurring difficulties associated with the dire lack of financial resources, the Network was able to undertake and carry out various scientific and cultural activities. But this was only possible thanks to the commitment of a few foundations and research institutions, including the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation, the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation, the UNESCO Chairs of the universities of Florence and Félix Houphouët-Boigny Abidjan.

A greater engagement of all members of the Network to achieve all objectives and implement new projects to promote the culture of peace in Africa is needed.

The Standing Executive Secretary

Jean-Noël LOUCOU